



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
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NEWS RELEASE

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Education Department awards \$5.4 million to Pawtucket, Providence schools Federal School Improvement Grant funds to help advance school reform

The R.I. Department of Education (RIDE) has awarded \$5.4 million over three years in federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) funds to seven schools in Pawtucket and Providence to help the schools implement plans for school reform.

The seven schools are those that RIDE identified last October as among the persistently lowest-achieving in the state. Each school developed a plan for school reform, which the SIG funds will partially finance.

The awards announced today (April 18, 2012) are:

	Award amount: 1 st year
Charles E. Shea Senior High School, Pawtucket	\$349,297
Mount Pleasant High School, Providence	\$325,290
Pleasant View Elementary School, Providence	\$424,328
William E. Tolman Senior High School, Pawtucket	\$349,297
Providence UP Schools	\$351,788
Carl G. Lauro Elementary School	
Gilbert Stuart Middle School	
Dr. Jorge Alvarez High School	

Total 1st-year awards: \$1.8 million

“With input from students, teachers, parents, and other community stakeholders, each of these schools has developed an ambitious plan for improving learning and achievement,” said Education Commissioner Deborah A. Gist. “After careful review of these plans, we are pleased to provide support that will help each school turn its plan into action. I am confident that each of these schools can accelerate toward greatness and prepare all students for success.”

“We are grateful for the award and very appreciative of those who served in the stakeholder groups,” said Deborah Cylke, Pawtucket Schools Superintendent. “We are eager to get started and are looking forward to the transformative work. I am confident that our transformation plan will result in improved academic achievement and graduation rates at both Shea and Tolman High Schools.”

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“Providence is engaged and ready to take on the work that these SIG funds will help to support,” said Providence Schools Superintendent Susan Lusi. “We know that we have much work ahead of us to meaningfully intervene in all of these five schools, and the confidence of RIDE in our plans is a significant stride toward realizing our goals.”

The RIDE protocol for persistently low-achieving schools requires that each school select a school-reform model and submit a school-reform plan to the Commissioner for review and approval. Superintendents convene stakeholder groups to provide guidance throughout the process.

Four of the schools identified last October (Mount Pleasant, Pleasant View, Shea, and Tolman) selected the Transformation model, which requires replacing the principal (unless the principal was recently selected for reform purposes), rigorous evaluations that include rewards for increasing student achievement and removal of those who do not improve their professional practice, instructional reform, increased learning time, ongoing community engagement, and operational flexibility regarding staffing and budgeting.

The other three schools identified last October (Alvarez, Lauro, and Stuart) selected the Restart model, in which the school reopens under a regional collaborative, a charter-school operator or management organization, an educational-management organization, or a joint labor-management compact.

These three schools will operate under a joint labor-management compact, United Providence (UP), a collaboration between the Providence School District and the Providence Teachers Union.

Commissioner Gist has approved the selection of the school-reform models, which enabled the schools to begin developing their plans for reform. The School Improvement Grant funds that RIDE has awarded will help the schools finance the implementation of their reform plans over the next three years.

RIDE identified the first cohort of persistently low-achieving schools in 2010. That cohort includes Central Falls High School and four Providence schools (the B. Jae Clanton Complex, the Juanita Sanchez Complex, Lillian Feinstein Elementary School at Sackett Street, and the Roger Williams Middle School).

All of the schools in the 2010 cohort are implementing plans for school transformation. These schools received School Improvement Grants last year, totaling \$11 million over three years, to implement their transformation plans.

The RIDE protocol for interventions and the methods for identifying the lowest-achieving schools are part of the Rhode Island strategic plan for accelerating all schools toward greatness and are based on guidance from the U.S. Department of Education regarding the use of funds for high-poverty schools (Title I) and the Race to the Top grant application guidance. RIDE has posted the protocol on its website, at:

http://www.ride.ri.gov/ride/Docs/Protocol_for_Interventions.pdf